THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH) ; (a) Government have seen reports of some violence against members of the minority communities in Bangladesh.

(b) The Bangladesh Government have assured our High Com mission in Dhaka that the interests of the minorities in that country will be safeguarded.

Indo-Nepal Meeting

4422. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the first Indo-Nepal meeting has been held in Kathmandu in the second week of August, 1988;

(b) if so, the details of discussions held; and

(c) the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH) ; (a) The first meeting of the Indo-Nepal Joint Commission was held in Kathmandu on the 13th August, 1988.

(b) The meeting discussed organisational matters regarding the functioning of the Joint Commission.

(c) It was decided to appoint three Sub-Commissions—on Trade and Transit, on Economic and Industrial Cooperation, and on Water Resources-to deal with various subjects of economic cooperation.

Jobs for Blind in Central Government

4423. SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state the number of jobs which have been made available for blinds in A and B Groups in the Central Government Services during the last one year ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : Since there is no reservation for the physically handicapped (including the Blind) in Group 'A' & Group 'B' services ,the statistical information not centrally monitored and is, therefore, not readily available.

Purchase of Blankets for Army

4424. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the purchase of blankets for use by the Army from the NTC and BIC are causing huge losses to the national exchequer because of procurement of the same by the NTC and BIC from private companies instead of manufacturing there;

(b) if so, the details of the requirements of the blankets for the Army and its policy of purchases ; and

(c) what steps have been taken to avoid inflated prices due to procurement from private companies by Government undertakings and supplying the same to the Army?